



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

September 8, 2005

News Release

ICE LAW ENFORCEMENT SUPPORT PROVES CRITICAL TO HURRICANE KATRINA RESCUE AND SECURITY EFFORTS

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) today announced that over the past ten days it has deployed roughly 725 law enforcement and support personnel from around the country to the Gulf Coast as part of the government's response to Hurricane Katrina.

ICE employees are in the affected areas to save lives, to protect lives, and to provide security to the recovery effort. ICE's primary objectives are to support authorities in securing New Orleans and other affected communities and to provide security to federal rescue and recovery efforts. While ICE is contributing unprecedented resources to this disaster, ICE continues to perform its law enforcement missions nationwide.

The individuals that make up this ICE force come from all components of the agency, including more than 400 special agents from ICE Office of Investigations (OI); more than 200 officers from ICE Federal Protective Service (FPS); and more than 100 officers from ICE Detention and Removal Operations (DRO). This cadre also includes eight Special Response Teams (tactical law enforcement teams) comprised of highly trained armed personnel from OI and DRO. Furthermore, ICE has deployed a Protective Medical Branch that consists of ICE FPS law enforcement officers with specialized medical training.

The assets that ICE has deployed to the Gulf Coast include four ICE Mobile Command Centers with communications equipment/uplink capabilities to assist in the exchange of information in locations without communications; two mobile repeaters and related equipment to enhance law enforcement communication, nine ICE DRO buses, and 13 ICE transportation vans.

Below are a few anecdotes from ICE operations on the Gulf Coast in just the past two days:

- An ICE OI Special Response Team equipped for marine operations rescued a 99-year-old woman who had been stuck in her New Orleans home surrounded by four feet of water since Hurricane Katrina hit last week. The woman is the mother of a Lieutenant Colonel currently serving with the U.S. military in Iraq. After the hurricane, her son in Iraq had contacted his military command in the United States via e-mail asking for assistance for his mother. The request was passed to military

officials in New Orleans who conveyed the message to the New Orleans Police Department and the ICE Special Response Team. The ICE team launched and found the woman.

- An ICE DRO Special Response Team rescued an elderly couple that had been stuck in their flooded New Orleans home for days without food and water. The woman had recently suffered a stroke. Family members living in Florida had not heard from the couple nor were they able to locate them in shelters since the hurricane. They contacted ICE officials in Florida who relayed the information to ICE Special Response Teams in New Orleans, which launched and rescued the couple.
- An ICE FPS Sergeant was providing security for a FEMA detail in New Orleans as part of the Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts when he observed a young man fall roughly 50 feet from a nearby overpass. The victim had been riding a bicycle on the overpass when he struck a wall, flipped over the rail, and fell to the water below. The officer responded and was able to pull him to safety.
- ICE Office of Intelligence employees in Washington, D.C. have been working around the clock to locate federal employees from different agencies that are unaccounted for as a result of Hurricane Katrina. These ICE employees have been able to help locate roughly 25 employees from four different agencies who were unaccounted for in the Gulf Coast area.
- ICE Special Response Teams participated in joint law enforcement operations with the New Orleans Police Department and SWAT teams to secure a major housing project known for violence. The operation resulted in the arrest of one subject and the seizure of two firearms. Earlier today, ICE Special Response Teams participated in a similar law enforcement operation to secure the Hibernia National Bank building in New Orleans.

ICE has established command locations in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Gulfport to coordinate communications with federal, state, and local officials working on the hurricane response. ICE officials are also playing leadership roles in the law enforcement aspects of the hurricane rescue and recovery operation.

ICE

ICE, the primary investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security, was established to bring a unified focus to the enforcement of U.S. immigration and customs laws, with the principal goal of preventing violations by terrorists and other criminals who threaten the nation's security.